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CONTENTS.

		Page.
	A Fore-word	iii
1.	Religion, most essential to mankind ...	1
2.	The confession of Faith of the Zoroastrian Religion.	2
3.	I am a Zoroastrian Mazda-worshipper...	3
4.	I am a Praiser of the Zoroastrian Mazdayaçnian Religion	5
5.	Ahura Mazda	6
6.	Where is Ahura (the Lord of Existence) to be seen ?	6
7.	Mazda, The All-wise Lord	8
8.	The Conception about Ahura-Mazda ...	9
9.	Immortality of the Soul, or, the Life Hereafter	11
10.	Our Responsibility	12
11.	The Retribution of our Conduct in this Life	14
12.	I Praise Humata, Hûkhta, Hvarashta ...	16
13.	Humata, Hûkhta, Hvarashta—the Fundamental principles of the Zoroastrian Religion	17
14.	Humata, that is, Good Manashni ...	18
15.	I Praise the Mazdayaçnian Religion ...	19
16.	The Mazdayaçnian Religion and Purity...	21
17.	Zoroastrian Religion removes Dissension and Quarrel	22
18.	Zoroastrian Religion inculcates the Spirit of Self-Sacrifice	24
19.	Our Duty towards Ahura-Mazda... ...	25

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20. Our Duty towards the Outside World. Our Parents and our Teachers ... 27
21. Our Duty towards Society. Our Elders and our Rulers 28
22. Our Duty towards all living Creatures 29
23. Our Duty towards the whole of Creation 30
24. Good Use of Ahura-Mazda's Creation ... 32
25. The Abuse of God's Creation—a Wrongful act. 34
26. Our Duty towards Ourselves 35
27. The substance of our Duties. Universal Love and Brotherhood 36
28. Zoroastrianism bestows Asha, *i. e.*, Righteousness 37
29. From Nature to Nature's God 39
30. To a Zoroastrian, his Religion is the Best of all Religions 41
31. God, the Giver of all Good 43
32. What does the proper Praise of Zoroastrianism consist of? 45
33. Summary 45

A Fore-word.

We have many books of Zoroastrian Catechism in Gujarati, but this is, if I do not mistake, the first attempt of its kind in English.

It is a rendering, not an exact translation, of my book on Zoroastrian Catechism in Gujarati (જરથોસ્તી ધર્મ સંબંધી પ્રશ્નોત્તર) published in 1907 under the auspices of "The Society for the promotion of Zoroastrian Religious Education and Knowledge."

There are several Zoroastrian children, who grow up without a good knowledge of Gujarati, and there are many, whose parents would wish them to read the principles of their Faith in English. I hope this brochure will be of use to them.

I note below, with pleasure, what some of the Head-Masters of our leading Parsee schools have said of this Catechism in its Gujarati garb.

JIVANJI JAMSHEDJI MODI.

Colaba, Roz 4, Mah 3, 1280 Yazdazardi,
15th November 1910.

Opinions of the Principals of some Parsee Schools.

"I think this Catechism will do very well" (Mr. D. N. Wadia, M. A., Principal, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsee Benevolent Institution).

"I approve of all the questions and answers" (Mr. Framji Bomanji Master, B. A., Principal, Fort and Proprietory High School).

"The compiler has produced a Catechism which may be acceptable to Parsis of all shades of opinion, for which, in my opinion, he deserves to be complimented." (Mr. Edalji Dorabji Talati, B. A., late Principal, Elphinstone High School).

"I have much pleasure to say that I found the subject-matter very interesting and quite suitable to Parsi children. It is a happy idea to take up the text of the well-known Confession of the Faith—Mazdayaçno-Ahmi—word by word, to explain the essential principles of Zoroastrianism. Looking to the difficulty of framing good Catechism, the author has succeeded very well in his effort." (Ervad Pallonji Dorabji Pavri, B. A., Principal, The Byramji Jejeebhoy Charitable Institution).

A CATECHISM OF THE ZOROASTRIAN RELIGION.

1.

Religion, most essential to mankind.

Q.—What is most absolutely essential for the good of mankind ?

A.—*Dîn* (*i. e.* religion).

Q.—What is meant by Dîn ?

A.—Dîn is a kind of law or system which reveals to us something, which teaches us something, which declares something.

Q.—What does Dîn reveal ?

A.—Dîn reveals a righteous path which leads us to (1) duty towards our God, (2) duty towards those round about us, and (3) duty towards ourselves.

Q.—Then there must be only one Dîn (religion) which reveals to mankind the path of duty ?

A.—Yes, of course, there must be only one.

Q.—Then why is it that there are so many different religions ?

A.—In different countries and at different times, different persons have, more or less, tried to reveal this path of duty in accordance with their own views. Hence it is that more than one religion are known in this world.

Q.—What is, then, the name of our religion ?

A.—Mâzdayaçnî Zarathoshtî.

Q.—On what authority do you give this name ?

A.—On the authority of the sacred formula, which, a Zoroastrian, after being invested with the Sudreh (sacred shirt) and Kusti (sacred thread) as symbols of the Zoroastrian religion, recites daily while putting on the Kusti.

Q.—What is the nature of this sacred formula ?

A.—This sacred formula is the short Confession of Faith of our religion.

Q.—What do you mean by the Confession of Faith ?

A.—The Confession of Faith is a Declaration, which one has to make as a Zoroastrian, and which one must observe in his conduct in life as a Zorcastrian.

2.

The Confession of Faith of the Zoroastrian Religion.

Q.—Recite the Confession of Faith of the Zoroastrian Religion.

A.—Mazdayaçnô ahmi, Mazdayaçnô Zarathushtrish. Fravarânê âstutaschâ fravarêtaschâ, Âstuyê humatem manô, âstuyê hûkhtem vachô, âstuyê hvarshtem shyaothanem. Âstuyê daênām vanghuhîm mâzdayaçnîm fraspâya-okhedhrām, nidhâsnaithishem, khaêtvadathām,

ashaonîm, yâ hâitinâmchâ bûshyêintinâmchâ mazishtâchâ vahishtâchâ sraêshtâçhâ yâ Âhuirish Zarathushtrish. Ahurâi Mazdâi vîspâ vohû chinahmî. Aêshâ astî daênayâo Mâzdayaçn ôish âstûitish.

Q.—What is the meaning of these Articles of Faith ?

A.—I am a worshipper of God (Mazda), I am a Zoroastrian worshipper of God. I agree to praise the Zoroastrian religion and to believe in that religion. I praise (*humata*) good thoughts, I praise (*hûkhta*) good words, I praise (*hvarshta*) good deeds. I praise the good Mazdayaçnian religion, which allays dissensions and quarrels, which brings about kinship or brotherhood, which is holy, which is the greatest, the best, and the most excellent of all (the religions) that exist and that shall, in future, exist, and which is the religion revealed by Ahura (Mazda) to Zoroaster. I ascribe all good to Ahura Mazda. This is the praise (profession) of the Mazdayaçnian religion.

3.

I am a Zoroastrian Mazda-worshipper.

Q.—Why is our religion named Zoroastrian Mazdayaçnian ?

A.—From the first words of the above Confession of Faith, *viz.*, Mazdayaçnô ahmi, Mazdayaçnô Zarathushtrish.

Q.—What do these words mean ?

A.—I am a Mazda-worshipper, I am a Zoroastrian Mazda-worshipper.

Q.—Now, what is the meaning of the word 'Mâzdayaçni' used in the name of our religion, *viz.*, 'Mâzdayaçni Zarathoshti' ?

A.—'Mâzdayaçni' means 'believing in Mazda,' *i. e.*, the all-wise Lord.

Q.—What does our Mâzdayaçnian religion teach us about God ?

A.—Our religion teaches us that our earth, together with its rivers and rivulets, seas and oceans, hills and mountains, plants and trees, animals and men, the sun and the moon, the planets and the stars, is the work of God, the result of His infinite knowledge and infinite wisdom. He has set all these to work in a prescribed and regular course. God is the Architect of the whole Universe.

Q.—Why is our religion called 'Zarathoshtî' or Zoroastrian ?

A.—Our religion is called Zoroastrian, because it was first taught to our forefathers in ancient Irân by our great prophet Zarathushtra.

Q.—What are the names of this prophet's parents ?

A.—His father's name was Pourushasp and his mother's, Dogdô.

Q.—How are we, who profess his religion, named ?

A.—We are known as Mazdayaçnâns, because we

believe in Mazda, the all-wise Lord, and we are known as Zarathoshti or Zoroastrians because we believe in Mazda in accordance with the teaching imparted by Zarathushtra.

Q.—How are we known in accordance with these two names ?

A.—We are known as Zarathoshti Mazdayaçnâns, *i. e.* Zoroastrian Mazda-worshippers.

4.

I am a Praiser of the Zoroastrian Mazdayacnian Religion.

Q.—What is the first profession you make as a Zoroastrian, according to the Confession of Faith ?

A.—Fravarânê âstûtaschâ fravarêtaschâ.

Q.—Give the meaning of this formula.

A.—I agree to be a praiser of the Zoroastrian religion and to believe in that religion.

Q.—What does the Zoroastrian religion ask you to believe in ?

A.—It asks us to believe in three things.

Q.—What are those three things ?

A.—(1) The Existence of Mazda, the all-wise Lord; (2) the Immortality of the Soul, or, the Life Hereafter ; and (3) our Responsibility for our thoughts, words and actions.

5.

Ahura Mazda.

Q.—By what name is the Almighty God known in our religious books?

A.—The original name is Mazda. Then Ahura being prefixed to Mazda, we often find the name Ahura-Mazda.

Q.—What does our religion say of God?

A.—It says that God is Ahura, *i. e.*, the Lord of Existence.

Q.—What is meant by that?

A.—It means that God existed from all Eternity. He always is, and will always be. He is self-existent, *i. e.*, He does not depend on any other being or cause for His existence.

Q.—What has he done by thus continuing to exist for ever?

A.—He has brought the whole universe into existence. Whatever we see in this world has been created by Him. He is the Source of the existence of all.

6.

Where is Ahura (the Lord of Existence) to be seen?

Q.—Where is the Almighty Lord to be seen?

A.—The Almighty Lord is invisible.

Q.—How can we know of His existence if He is invisible?

A.—He manifests Himself in his Nature. We know of His existence from the Grand Nature before us, from the Universe created by Him.

Q.—How ?

A.—When we turn our eyes high up in the Heavens, we see that the sun, the moon, and the countless stars work and revolve with perfect Harmony and Order. We find System, Order, Principle, Rule everywhere. This shows that all around, there is the hand of an Architect. This Architect is the Almighty Lord.

Q.—What else do we see when we look a little below the Heavens ?

A.—The air, which we breathe and which is felt by us in the form of wind. By its regular motion, its periodic currents and its regular atmospheric changes, it tells us that it is the work of a great Architect, whose guiding hand makes it move and work in a systematic orderly way.

Q.—What do you notice when you look still lower down ?

A.—The earth, on which we live, with its regular and prescribed movements, its growth and waste. This earth, with its waters, trees and plants, animals and men, bears evident traces of the work of the great Architect's hand and of His infallible and unalterable law.

Q.—Then, it is the whole Universe, the whole Nature, that makes us recognize and believe in the Infinite being of the Almighty Lord ?

A.—Yes. This wide universe around us proves the existence of that Almighty Lord.

Q.—How ?

A.—We see, in all Nature, uniform and constant Principles, harmonious invariable Laws, regular undeviating Order. All these show that there must be in Existence an All-wise Lord as the Originator and Maintainer of all.

7.

Mazda, The All-wise Lord.

Q.—What else does the Zoroastrian religion teach us about the Almighty ?

A.—It teaches us that the Almighty is Mazda, *i. e.*, Omniscient. He possesses infinite and sovereign wisdom.

Q.—How does His omniscience come to our knowledge ?

A.—From the fact that He governs the whole universe with wisdom.

Q.—What is meant by saying that He governs the whole universe with wisdom ?

A.—He has, in His infinite wisdom, formed a design, according to which the whole universe, the sun, the moon, the stars, air, water, the

earth, trees and plants, animals and men keep themselves at ceaseless work and make themselves serviceable to one another. He had formed the design, and He rules according to that design.

Q.—What does He know in relation to mankind?

A.—Whatever we think, whatever we speak, whatever we do, is all known to Him.

Q.—What is the result of that knowledge?

A.—Knowing what we think, what we speak, and what we do, He rewards us for what is good in our thoughts, words and deeds, and punishes us for what is bad in them.

Q.—When does God thus reward or punish us?

A.—At some time or another, when the proper occasion arrives.

Q.—Then, this much is certain, that God will reward us for our good thoughts, good words and good deeds, and punish us for our evil ones?

A.—Yes, it is quite certain.

8.

The Conception about Ahura Mazda.

Q.—What idea do we form of Ahura-Mazda from the tenets of the Zoroastrian religion?

A.—The first and principal idea we form of Him is that He is Omnipresent. He is present everywhere.

Q.—Explain how this is so.

A.—He has created the sun, the moon, the stars, air, water, the earth, together with other things whether animate or inanimate. He has kept them all at ceaseless work in accordance with fixed laws. This shows that Ahura-Mazda's invisible hand is working everywhere.

Q.—What is the second principal conception we form of Ahura-Mazda?

A.—The second conception we form is that of His Infinite Existence. He has existed from all Eternity. His creation has existed from the infinite past in one form or another, and shall continue to exist evermore. So, the Creator and the Preserver of all things in their ever changing forms, has also existed from all Eternity, through countless ages, and shall exist for evermore.

Q.—What is the third principal idea you form of Ahura-Mazda?

A.—The third principal idea is that of His Omnipotence. He is perfectly capable of doing what he wishes in accordance with His fixed laws.

Q.—What is the fourth principal idea you form of Ahura-Mazda?

A.—The fourth idea we form of Him is that He, who rewards us for our virtuous con-

duct and punishes us for our improper conduct, is Himself abounding in Goodness and Justice.

Q.—Then, how is Ahura-Mazda spoken of in our sacred books for these particular excellences?

A.—He is spoken of as *mazishta*, *vahishta*, *sraêshta*, *i. e.*, the Greatest, the Best, and the most Excellent in Virtue, Rightousness and Goodness.

9.

Immortality of the Soul, or, the Life Hereafter.

Q.—We have said above that the Zoroastrian religion enjoins us to believe in three things. Out of these three, we have looked into the question concerning one, *viz.* The Existence of Ahura-Mazda. Now, what is the second thing we are to believe in?

A.—The life after death.

Q.—What do you mean by 'the life after death'?

A.—We, mankind, do not continue to live for ever in this world. All who are born will die one day and will have another life hareafter.

Q.—What do you mean by 'another life'?

A.—There is a progress in life. We are born as children and we grow up. We then pass through youth and become old. After old

age comes death. Sometimes, a person dies earlier without attaining to old age. All then go in the presence of their Creator in the invisible world. They live there. The body perishes but the soul lives.

Q.—Then death is ordained for all at one time or another ?

A.—Yes. As, on birth, we came into existence from Ahura-Mazda, so, after death we go back to Him in accordance with his fixed law. As, when we were born, we had our being from Ahura-Mazda, so, when we die, we shall go back to Him. There, we shall pass through another life, a life in conformity with His commandments and in accordance with our own deserts.

Q.—Then, do those of our relatives and friends who have ceased to live exist elsewhere ? Do they pass through another life ?

A.—Yes. They pass through another life in conformity with Ahura-Mazda's commandments. Those who have ceased to live in this world have passed into another life elsewhere according to His commandments.

10.

Our Responsibility.

Q.—What is the third thing which the Zoroastrian religion enjoins us to believe in, as an article of our faith ?

A.—Our Responsibility.

Q.—What do you mean by 'Responsibility'?

A.—We shall be judged properly in the court of God, for all that we think, for all that we speak, for all that we do in this world.

Q.—What do you mean by saying that 'we shall be judged properly in the court of God'? Do you mean that we shall be judged after our death?

A.—No. We have learnt that God exists everywhere and at all times. So, His court exists everywhere and at all times. We are therefore judged by him on all proper occasions. We shall be requited for our deeds in this life or in the life hereafter.

Q.—How?

A.—If we do good in this world, Ahura-Mazda will do us good. We shall be requited for our goodness in this life at the proper time. But, if the proper time does not come in this life, we should not loose heart. As Ahura-Mazda is the Lord of Goodness and Justice, if under some circumstances, we do not receive any reward due to our conduct in this life, we are sure to receive it in the life hereafter.

11.

The Retribution of our Conduct in this Life.

Q.—Are we rewarded in any way in this life for our goodness, pending the time when we shall be rewarded by Ahura Mazda in the life hereafter?

A.—Yes, indeed, in many ways.

Q.—Say, how shall we be principally rewarded here?

A.—Principally, by the satisfaction of our inner self. The satisfaction of the Self within us is the greatest of rewards.

Q.—Explain how this is so?

A.—We rejoice in the very thought, that we have done a good deed, that we have deported ourselves well. Our conscience speaks from within us: "Bravo! We have done our duty." This, to our mind, is the greatest reward.

Q.—You know for certain, that God would reward us for our deeds in the life hereafter.

A.—Yes. If, under certain circumstances, we are not rewarded here for our righteousness, we should not be depressed, but must put our trust in God that all will turn out for our good hereafter.

Q.—All this is about one's good actions. But what, if one does wrong?

A.—We must take the same view of it as above.

Q.—In what way?

A.—We are sure to be punished in one way or another for our bad conduct or for the evil deeds we do.

Q.—What are we to think if this does not happen here?

A.—Perhaps, the proper time for punishment may not come in this life, but, we shall certainly see the consequences in the life hereafter.

Q.—But what till then? Is no punishment inflicted on us pending that time?

A.—The anguish of remorse is the punishment.

Q.—Will you explain how this is so?

A.—If we do anything wrong, our guilty conscience will continue to harass us with the thought that we have done something wrong. Howsoever much we may try to conceal this, we shall be distressed in mind, and mental distress will make us wretched.

Q.—Then, according to the teaching of our religion, there is no saviour for one, other than himself?

A.—Of course, not. Every man is his own saviour. His deeds alone will bring out his salvation. A man is the architect of his own fortune. He is his own saviour.

12.

I praise *Humata, Hûkhta, Hvarshta.*

Q.—We have understood the three elements of Religion which Zoroastrianism asks us to believe. Let us now proceed with our Confession of Faith. What else do we recite in that Confession and what do we profess ?

A.—Âstuyê humatem manô, âstuyê hûkhtem vachô, âstuyê hvarshtem shyaothnem.

Q.—What do you mean by this ?

A.—I praise *humata*, *i. e.*, good thoughts. I praise *hûkhta*, *i. e.*, good words. I praise *hvarshta*, *i. e.*, good actions.

Q.—What do the above words teach you about responsibility and salvation ?

A.—They teach us that *humata*, *hûkhta*, and *hvarashta* are the basis of our bearing in this life. It is these that lead us to salvation.

Q.—Explain how it is so ?

A.—If you will always keep your thoughts pure *i. e.*, if you will think of nothing but what is true and proper, and if after such pure and good thoughts, you will speak nothing but the truth, and if, after speaking nothing but the truth, you will do nothing but what is good and righteous, then Ahura Mazda will reward you for all that, and you will pass a happy life.

13.

Humata, Hûkhta, Hvarashta—the fundamental principles of the Zoroastrian Religion.

Q.—Does not everything depend on thoughts, words and deeds?

A.—Yes. The world, as it were, depends only on this triad.

Q.—Explain how this is so.

A.—Man must, first of all, form an idea of something. In order to express that idea, speech is necessary. He expresses his thoughts to others through words or language. After forming a thought, or after expressing that thought in words, he performs an action.

Q.—Then, whatever has a good foundation has its superstructure also good?

A.—Yes. If these three, viz., thought, word and deed which are called in our religion, *manashni*, *gavashni*, and *kunashni* respectively, are good, then the structure erected over their basis will be good, *i. e.*, our life, will also turn out to be good and happy.

Q.—Then *manashni*, *gavashni* and *kunashni* may be good as well as bad?

A.—Yes.

Q.—How are *manashni*, *gavashni* and *kunashni* designated in our religious books when they are good or righteous?

A.—They are called in our sacred scriptures, *humata*, *hûkhta* and *hvarshta*, or good *manashni*, good *gavashni* and good *kunashni*.

Q.—How are they designated when they are bad?

A.—*Dushmata*, *duzukhta* and *duzvarshta*, or bad *manashni*, bad *gavashni* and bad *kunashni*.

14.

Humata, that is, Good *Manashni*.

Q.—Out of this triad of *humata*, *hûkhta*, and *hvarshta*, *i. e.*, good thoughts, good words and good deeds, which is the most important?

A.—The most important and essential is *humata*, or good *manashni*, *i. e.*, a good thought.

Q.—How so?

A.—If our thoughts are good, everything else will turn out good. If our thoughts are righteous, then the words giving utterance to these thoughts would necessarily be righteous and hence the deeds also would be righteous.

Q.—Then, as pure air is necessary for bodily health, pure thoughts are necessary for mental health?

A.—Yes, indeed.

Q.—Will you explain how this is so?

A.—Yes. It is the duty of every man to preserve the purity of the air, round about him, so that his health and the health of his neighbours may not be impaired. The health of the body would then act upon the health of the mind. In the same way, it is the duty of every man to try to keep his own thoughts, as well as the thoughts of his neighbours, pure and righteous, so that he may create around him an atmosphere of good thoughts, that may lead, not only to his own happiness, but to the happiness of all.

Q.—Then, everything depends on *humata*, or, good *manashni*, *i. e.*, good thoughts?

A.—Yes. If our thoughts are righteous, our motives are good, our intentions are honest, the result will be wholesome and happy. If, under certain circumstances, the manifest result of a deed done with good intent may turn out bad, we are not regarded as sinners in the eyes of God.

15.

I praize the Mazdayacnian Religion.

Q.—We have seen, what, according to the Zoroastrian Articles of Faith, are the three elements of religion, and what the three fundamental

moral principles of Zoroastrianism are. Now, let us proceed further in the matter of these Articles of Faith. What more do you recite therein, and what further do you profess ?

A.—Astuyê daênãm vanghuhîm Mâzdayaçnîm.

Q.—What is the meaning of this ?

A.—I praise the good Mazdayaçnian religion.

Q.—What is the object of reciting these words at this place ?

A.—The Zoroastrian religion is praised here for its three fundamental elements, or the three elementary principles which serve as the basis of all virtuous conduct.

Q.—What is meant to be implied here ?

A.—These elementary truths or fundamental principles make up, as it were, the Zoroastrian religion. They are the pivot upon which the whole sturcture of Zoroastrian morality turns.

Q.—Then, is it for its excellent moral teaching that a Zoroastrian praises the good Mazdayaçnian religion in his Confession of Faith ?

A.—Yes. He praises the Zoroastrian religion for its moral teaching and declares himself to be a follower of that religion.

16.

The Mazdayacnian Religion and Purity.

Q.—In the Confession of Faith, *humata*, *hûkhta* and *hvarshta* are regarded as the basis of the Zoroastrian religion. Is a similar idea expressed elsewhere in the Avesta?

A.—Yes. We find a similar idea expressed in the Vendidâd.

Q.—What is said therein?

A.—It is said that "Purity is best for man from his very birth, because purity is the same as the Mazdayaçnian religion."

Q.—What particular signification is attached therein to the Mazdayaçnian religion?

A.—The particular signification attached therein is, that the Mazdayaçnian religion consists of Purity.

Q.—What do you mean by saying that 'Mazdayaçnian religion consists of purity?

A.—If you wish to be a Mazdayaçnian, you should observe purity.

Q.—What is, then, meant by purity?

A.—Purity is of two kinds—physical and mental.

Q.—What is physical purity?

A.—Physical purity consists in always keeping our body clean and sound.

Q.—What is the technical word for 'purity' in our sacred books?

A.—*Asha.* This word specially applies to mental purity?

Q.—Then, what is *asha*, or mental purity?

A.—*Asha* or mental purity consists in entertaining good thoughts and dispelling evil thoughts.

Q.—Then, what should be our course of conduct in life which may best be regarded as professing the Zoroastrian religion?

A.—We should observe purity of mind, and should adopt *humata*, *hûkhta* and *hvarshta*. This is the most proper way of professing the Zoroastrian religion.

Q.—Is it for this reason then, that, as seen above, the Zoroastrian religion is styled 'good' in the Confession of Faith?

A.—Yes. And it is for this reason that Zoroastrians are called *Behdin* (*i. e.*, those professing the good religion).

17.

The Zoroastrian Religion Removes Dissension and Quarrel.

Q.—It is by reason of several good characterstics, based on the above wholesome fundamental elements regarded as the basis of religion, that Zoroastrianism is called 'the good religion,' and a list of these characterstics is given in the Confession of Faith.

What is the first characteristic referred to therein ?

A.—Fraspâyaokhedhrām nidhâsnaithishem, *i. e.*, allaying dissension and quarrel and causing one to lay down arms.

Q.—What is the reason of saying so ?

A.—The reason thereof is, that those, who would act in accordance with the precepts of the Zoroastrian religion, would keep themselves aloof from dissensions and quarrels. As Ahura-Mazda has bestowed freedom of will upon man, this religion enjoins that every man should make a choice of this religion of his own free accord after properly understanding it, and that the professors of this religion should observe tolerance towards those of other faiths.

Q.—What is the second reason thereof ?

A.—Another reason is this that the professors of this religion should live in harmony and peace.

Q.—With whom should we live in harmony and peace ?

A.—We should live in harmony and peace with all, not only with our own co-religionists, but even with the professors of other religions. Again, we should behave with courtesy and politeness even with our enemies.

Q.—How should we act with courtesy and politeness even with enemies ?

A.—We should not be vindictive and we should not harass them. We should try to bring about a state of affairs whereby they may not harass us and others. We should not wish ill of them but should overcome their enmity with our good bearing towards them. We should pray to Ahura-Mazda that He may endow them with goodness which would enable them to behave in a better way with us and with others.

18.

The Zoroastrian Religion Inculcates the Spirit of Self-Sacrifice.

Q.—What other characteristic of this religion is further mentioned in the Confession of Faith, and what epithet is applied to the religion on account of that characteristic ?

A.—Khaêtvadathãm, *i. e.*, bestowing the gift of giving one's self up in relationship to, or in communion with others or, inculcating self-sacrifice.

Q.—What is meant by that ?

A.—Every person should bring himself in relationship or communion, first of all, with Ahura-Mazda, then, with the outside world, and lastly, with his own self.

Q.—What do you mean by saying that one should bring himself into relationship or communion ?

A.—Every person should discharge his duty (1) towards Ahura-Mazda, (2) towards the outside world and (3) towards himself. He should do all these duties and please Ahura-Mazda thereby.

19.

Our duty towards Ahura-Mazda.

Q.—Then, what is meant by the above-mentioned teaching is this: that Zoroastrianism inculcates a spirit of self-sacrifice and asks one to do his duty ?

A.—Yes. It imposes on us three sorts of duties. It urges on us these duties and enjoins us to abandon selfishness and exclusiveness.

Q.—Then, let us turn our thoughts to the teaching of the Zoroastrian religion concerning these three kinds of duties. First, say, what is our duty towards Ahura-Mazda.

A.—When we think of relationship, when we think of a relative or of one of our own kith and kin, we are put in mind of a family. The members of a family are all regarded as kinsmen. Similarly, when we think of Ahura-Mazda, of those who form our surroundings, and of our own selves, we are reminded of a large family. Ahura-Mazda is the Father of that family, the Father of us all. Our neighbours, or those who form our surroundings, are the offspring of that great Father and members of His great family, and we ourselves occupy a certain place or position in that family.

Q.—This is a fair and reasonable comparision. Now, from this, how do we form an idea of the three kinds of our duty?

A.—From the idea of the duty of a faithful child towards his father, we form the idea of our duty towards Ahura-Mazda.

Q.—Will you explain how it is so?

A.—We must look to Ahura-Mazda with respect and reverence, and render him complete obedience and devotion. We must always remember him. We must abide by His commandments. We must always obey His Laws. We must pay our homage to Him. We must be thankful to Him.

Q.—What do you mean by saying that we must obey His laws and follow His commandments?

A.—We must act according to His will. We must embody in ourselves His attributes and virtues, which we see manifested by him in Nature.

Q.—Well, what else?

A.—We must turn to Him for aid and support in our work, and must do our best to deserve that aid and support.

Q.—What more?

A.—We must look to him for comfort and consolation in times of tribulation and trouble.

20.

Our Duty towards the Outside World. Our Parents and our Teachers.

Q.—What is our first duty towards those round about us?

A.—Our first duty is, that we should do unto them as we would that they should do unto us.

Q.—Explain this a little more clearly.

A.—We naturally wish that others may treat us with courtesy, affection and magnanimity. Then it is our duty to act towards them in the same way.

Q.—In the matter of duty, who draws our attention, first of all, among the outside world?

A.—Mankind.

Q.—Who draws our attention first among mankind?

A.—Our parents.

Q.—With what tie of duty are we bound to them?

A.—Our first duty towards them is to love them. They have cherished us with love and affection; therefore we, in return, must treat them with love and affection.

Q.—What is our second duty towards our parents?

A.—We must always honour them.

Q.—What is our third duty towards them?

A.—When we were infants, they cherished and maintained us with tenderness ; therefore it is our duty to be thankful to them, to obey them, and, when they become infirm with age, to cherish them, to support and maintain them and to render them faithful service.

Q.—Who draws our attention next to our parents ?

A.—Our teachers.

Q.—What is our duty towards them ?

A.—We must attend to the lessons they prescribe and listen to their advice and act according to that advice.

21.

Our Duty towards Society. Our Elders and Our Rulers.

Q.—Who, next, comes under our notice after our parents and teachers ?

A.—Society.

Q.—What is our duty towards society in general ?

A.—We must observe the laws and rules of society. We must act towards our elders with courtesy and politeness.

Q.—Who, among our elders and our superiors first draws our notice ?

A.—Our rulers. It is our bounden duty to respect our rulers and to respect the laws enacted by them for the good of their subjects.

Q.—Besides the duties mentioned above, what should be our general rule of conduct towards those round about us?

A.—The first principle of conduct should be this: We should do as much good to others as lies in our power. We should never harm others. We should do no harm even to our enemy. We should never entertain any evil thought for him and never wish any evil to him.

Q.—What other rule of conduct should we be guided by, in our bearing towards others?

A.—Honesty of purpose. We should act towards all in an upright way. We should observe fair play in all our social intercourse. If, by honest means, we get a penny, we should accept it with all humility. If, by dishonest means, we can amass riches, we should look at them with contempt.

22.

Our Duty towards All Living Creatures.

Q.—In the creation round about us, who draws our attention next to our fellow-men?

A.—All animals and living creatures. We should treat all animals with kindness.

Q.—What about noxious creatures or harmful animals?

A.—As for the animals or beasts of prey which harass men and harmless beasts of burden, such a state of existence should be produced for them as would not permit of their doing harm.

Q.—How should we act towards the beasts of burden and other animals serviceable to mankind?

A.—We should treat them with kindness. We should give them proper food and nourishment. We must exact from them, as much work only as lies in their power to do. We should not treat them cruelly for the sake of our bread and should not exact from them work beyond their capacity. When we do not treat them properly, they, as it were, curse us. On the other hand, if we treat them well, they bless us.

23.

Our Duty towards the Whole of Creation.

Q.—To whom else, besides our fellow-men and animals, do we owe a duty?

A.—We owe a duty to all the objects of God's creation, though they do not attract our attention as much as the animate creation.

Q.—How should we act towards the creation of God?

A.—Ahura-Mazda expects us to promote the growth and development of the whole of His creation,

whether animate or inanimate. Hence we should act in a way as would bring about its growth.

Q.—What is meant by saying that Ahura-Mazda expects us to promote the growth and development of His creation?

A.—The Creator of the universe expects from us, that we may so bring about the further growth of His creation as would bring about a better enjoyment of the creation and as would make the world, more and more, prosperous.

Q.—Will you give an instance?

A.—Yes. For instance, a man promotes the work of growth and development when he brings about the growth of two blades of corn where formerly grew only one. In this way, he pleases Ahura-Mazda. Though he may have enough for himself, he must increase the growth of corn so that others can buy it cheaply and readily.

Q.—Then, is it with this intent, that the Zoroastrian scriptures repeatedly sing the praise of agriculture?

A.—Yes, it is with this intent. The sacred books go so far, as to say, that sowing corn is equivalent to the spread of the Mazdayaçnian religion.

Q.—How can the growth of corn be equivalent to the spread of the Mazdayaçnian religion?

A.—It is in this way: If there is plenty of corn, man thereby keeps himself healthy. A healthy body enables man to have a healthy good mind, which, in its turn, enables him to do good works. Thus, he leads a pious good life which finds acceptance with Ahura-Mazda. 'Leading a good life' is synonymous with 'belief in the Mazdayaçnian religion'.

Q.—In what wider sense should we now understand the injunction about agriculture laid down in our scriptures?

A.—We should understand it in the sense that it is man's duty to engage himself in some sort of work. Work is a kind of worship.

Q.—What are the advantages of work?

A.—We thereby become independent. We are not forced to depend on others for support. Not only this, but we are able to do good to those poor relatives and friends who may be needy. We do not leave them to the mercy or throw them upon the charity of others for their support.

24.

Good Use of Ahura Mazda's Creation.

Q.—What is our second duty towards the creation around us?

A.—We must make a good use of all the objects of God's creation. Ahura-Mazda has created His objects of creation for our good use of them. If we make a bad use of them, they, as it were, become displeased and hence Ahura-Mazda Himself is displeased.

Q.—Will you give an instance?

A.—Yes. Take for instance, fire. Fire is created for our good by Ahura-Mazda. Concerning fire, it is said in one of our sacred books that there is a difference between two men preparing their meals over it.

Q.—Will you explain how it is so?

A.—Yes. If an upright man prepares, on fire, his meal out of things bought of money acquired by honest means, he makes a good use of fire. The fire is, as it were, pleased with it.

Q.—Then, in this instance, is that man said to have done his duty towards fire?

A.—Yes. He is said to have done his duty towards that object of Ahura-Mazda's creation.

Q.—Then, if a dishonest person prepares his meal, on his household fire, out of things bought out of his ill-gotten gains, what should we think?

A.—In this case, he makes a bad use of fire which becomes, as it were, displeased. The Archangel Ardibehesht presiding over fire is displeased.

25.

The Abuse of God's Creation— a Wrongful act.

Q.—If a man does not make a good use of the objects of creation round about him, is he said to have neglected his duty towards those objects ?

A.—Yes. He is said to have not only neglected his duty towards them, but to have done a wrongful act.

Q.—Will you give an instance ?

A.—Yes. Take, for example, metal. If a man prepares metallic tools to promote thereby agriculture or other industrial pursuits, the metal, whereof such implements are made,—or more properly, speaking in the language of our sacred books, the Ameshâspand Shehrivar presiding over metal in general,—becomes pleased. But if a thief, a robber, or a murderer prepares any metallic weapon, whereby he may kill others and rob them of their property, the Ameshâspand Shehrivar becomes displeased.

Q.—Then, it is with this object in view, that mention is made in our Patet Pashémâni (Prayer for repentance), of the different sins against the several Ameshâspands or against the objects of creation over which they preside ?

A.—Yes. It is with this object. A good use made of Ahura-Mazda's creation pleases Him and His Ameshâspands or the Spiritual Powers presiding over the different objects of creation. Its abuse makes them displeased.

26.

Our Duty towards Ourselves.

Q.—Let us now speak of our duty towards ourselves. What is our duty towards ourselves?

A.—Our first duty towards ourselves is to keep our body and mind sound and healthy. We must keep them clean and pure, and then make such a good use of them as would lead us thereby to do good, not only to ourselves, but also to our fellow-men and to our fellow-creatures, and enable us to help the growth and development of the whole of God's creation.

Q.—Do you mean to say, that by maintaining the health of body and by keeping the mind pure and active, we should try so to conduct our lives as would lead to the greatest growth and development of Ahura-Mazda's creation and help us to seek the greatest good of the greatest number?

A.—Yes. On the one hand, we should not enfeeble or enervate our body by unnecessary pain or exertion, and on the other, we should not

indulge in over-gratification of the senses and appetites. We must lead a simple life and maintain our body in good order. The mind remains sound and active when the body is kept in a sound state; and when the mind is sound and active, our soul is better able to perform righteous actions. By performing these righteous deeds, we please Ahura-Mazda.

Q.—Then, keeping fasts, leading a useless and idle life like that of the common class of ascetics and recluses, and disregarding proper and solicitous care of our body, are wrongful acts?

A.—Yes, all these are wrongful acts.

Q.—What is, then, the general drift of our duty towards ourselves?

A.—It is this: The body should be maintained in a sound state. We must cultivate our mental faculties with acquisition of good knowledge and enliven the kind feelings of our heart. We must make the best possible use of our intellectual and moral powers and thus act for the highest good of all round about us. Ahura Mazda, the Father of us all would be pleased thereby.

27.

The substance of our Duties. Universal Love and Brotherhood.

Q.—In what general sense should we accept the above-mentioned injunction, that the Zoroas-

trian religion bestows the gift of giving one's self in relationship with, or in communion to, God and His creation, and that it infuses a spirit of self-sacrifice ?

A.—The substance of this injunction is, that Universal Love should be the highest goal of our life.

Q.—Will you explain a little more clearly how we should observe Universal Love ?

A.—We should entertain love and fellow-feeling for all. Ahura-Mazda is the Father of us all. He is the Father of the whole Universe and we are all His offsprings. Hence, we should do our duty to all our fellow-creatures in accordance with the wishes of our Father, Ahura Mazda, who is the Upholder and Sustainer of us all. We should treat the whole animal creation with kindness and should so lead our lives as to promote the growth and development of the whole creation and add to its enjoyment and use by all.

28.

Zoroastrianism bestows Asha, *i. e.*, Righteousness.

Q.—Now, let us proceed further in the recital of the Articles of our Faith. Mention another characteristic epithet of Zoroastrianism as given in those Articles.

A.—It is spoken of as 'ashaonîm' *i. e.* holy.

Q.—With what object is the Zoroastrian religion spoken of as *ashaonîm* or righteous?

A.—This religion is spoken of as righteous, because it makes its professors *asha* or righteous.

Q.—What is meant by saying that the Zoroastrian religion makes its professors righteous?

A.—It teaches us that man should adopt and follow the good Principle, the righteous Path, the straight and perfect Law, and the regular Order established by Ahura-Mazda. To walk in this path is Asha or Righteousness. The only proper path is that of Asha or rightousness. All other paths are misleading.

Q.—Then, the path of Nature wherein is generally observed Harmony, System, Law or Order is the path of Asha, *i. e.*, Righteousness?

A.—Yes, it is so. We see Asha or Righteous Order established all throughout Nature. All Nature works in a regular and prescribed way, year after year, month after month, day after day, hour after hour, minute after minute, in accordance with the Law established by Ahura Mazda.

Q.—Will you quote instances of how this is so?

A.—Yes. We see the sun, the moon, and the stars rise and set at certain times in certain prescribed ways. Ebb and flow are caused at determined and fixed periods. The changes

of heat and cold in the atmosphere occur at stated times. Trees and plants germinate, grow and blossom in a regular way. Sometimes, the seasons seem to precede or recede, a little, from their stated periods, but even, these exceptions prove the rule.

Q.—Then Ahura-Mazda does all the work of His Universe in accordance with His established laws?

A.—Of course. The laws of the universe are established by Ahura-Mazda. His Laws are the laws of righteous Order. He acts only in conformity with His established Laws. Hence it is, that He Himself is spoken of as Ashô, or one following a path of righteous Order.

Q.—Then, what does our religion teach us about Asha or righteous order?

A.—It teaches us that we should imitate the Holy or Righteous God in his manifested Nature, and walk in the regular path set before us in accordance with His laws. We would thus make ourselves Asha or righteous.

29.

From Nature to Nature's God.

Q.—The excellence of the sublime objects of Nature, such as, the sun, the moon, the stars, mountains, rivers, fire, &c., is recognised in our scriptures and a reverential regard is

shown therein towards them. All this, then, is with the view to direct our thoughts from Nature to Nature's God ?

A.—Yes, it is with this object in view.

Q.—Is it also with the same object in view that fire occupies in our religion a pre-eminent position among all the objects of creation ?

A.—Yes, it is with this object in view.

Q.—Is it again with the same object in view that we hold fire in reverence and erect fire-temples, like the Atash-Behrâms and the Atash-Âdarâns, to preserve sacred fire therein ?

A.—Yes, it is with the same object. Fire is the manifestation of heat. Modern science also teaches us that heat, as power, does the greatest, almost all, work in this wide world in accordance with established laws in a regular way. Hence it is that we look up to fire, the manifested form of that power, with reverence.

Q.—Why is it that we look to the fire of the Fire-temples with greater reverence and regard ?

A.—We look to fire generally with reverential feelings, as the manifested form of the power of heat and light permeating this world and also as a symbol of the splendour and glory of the Creator. Then, in the case of the sacred

fire of the Fire-temples, the religious ritual in its consecration adds some elements of moral thoughts. Hence it is, that we look to this consecrated fire with greater reverence.

30.

To a Zoroastrian, his Religion is the Best of all Religions.

Q.—Let us proceed further in the recital of our articles of the Confession of Zoroastrian Faith. What other professon do we make therein ?

A.—We recite the following words and thereby regard our religion as the best of all religions :—

yâ hâitinâmchâ bûsyêintinâmchâ mazishtâchâ vahishtâchâ sraêshtâchâ yâ Âhuirish Zarathushtrish.

Q.—What do these words mean ?

A.—The Zoroastrian religion of Ahura-Mazda is the greatest, best and most excellent of all religions that exist and that shall, in future, come into existance.

Q.—Then, we must declare our belief that our Mazdayaçnian Zoroastrian religion is the best of all religions ?

A.—Yes, a Zoroastrian must profess that his religion is the best of all.

Q.—What, by way of analogy, is said about this in one of our sacred books ?

A.—It is said in the Vendidâd that the Zoroastrian religion is as much greater than all other religions, as the sea Vourukasha is greater than all other waters, such as those of lakes, springs and rivers.

Q.—What other similitude is given therein?

A.—That the Zoroastrian religion is more excellent than other religions in the same proportion as that in which a great stream flows swifter than a small stream.

Q.—What is the third similitude given therein?

A.—The Zoroastrian religion overshadows all other religions with its superiority in the same way as that in which a great tree overshadows small plants.

Q.—Then, those, who wish to be called Zoroastrians, must make an open declaration that their religion is the best of all?

A.—Yes. They must profess that the Zoroastrian religion is the greatest, best and most excellent of all religions that now exist or that shall, in future, exist?

Q.—Now, how are we to act towards other religions and the professors of those religions?

A.—With a firm and earnest belief in our own religion, we must behave with forbearance and toleration towards the professors of other religions.

31.

God, the Giver of all Good.

Q.—After declaring the Zoroastrian religion to be superior to other religions, what more do you declare in your Confession of Faith ?

A.—*Ahurâi Mazdâi vîspâ Vohû chinahmî, i. e.*, I ascribe all good to Ahura-Mazda.

Q.—What is the purport of this declaration ?

A.—The purport is that every thing proceeds from Ahura-Mazda. All good has its source in Ahura-Mazda. All things originate in Ahura-Mazda. Every thing is created by Ahura-Mazda alone.

Q.—What does this belief teach us ?

A.—It teaches us, that we must express our thankfulness to the Creator for the good that we enjoy. We ought to be grateful to Him for it. We should not be elated by pride for that good but we should accept it with all humility and meekness and should let our neighbours participate in it.

Q.—On the other hand, if any evil happens to us, or if we are involved in difficulties and trouble, what are we to think of that ?

A.—If that evil is the result of our own faults, we should repent of those faults before God and

should correct those faults. Thenceforth, we should pray to God, and do our best, so that no evil may happen to us through our own faults and that everything may turn out for our good.

Q.—If we are involved in affliction, not through our own faults or transgressions, but through circumstances over which we have no control what view are we to take of that ?

A.—We should affirm our faith in God, and bear those sufferings with a confident hope, that those sufferings are a trial for us and that everything will be right in the end.

Q.—What two things then are specially needed at the time of our tribulation and trouble ?

A.—We should, on the one hand, endeavour to relieve our sufferings and contribute to the advancement of our happiness, and, on the other hand, we should put implicit faith in Ahura-Mazda and believe that everything is intended by Ahura-Mazda for our good.

Q.—How will such thoughts do us good ?

A.—These two thoughts will, first of all, make us contented, and, secondly, they will put down our pride, and teaching us to maintain an even balance between prosperity and adversity, will conduce to our well-being.

32.

What does the proper Praise of Zoroastrianism consist of?

Q.—What are the final words of our Confession of Faith?

A.—*Aêshâ astî daênayâo Mâzdayaçnôish âstûitish*, *i. e.*, this is the praise of the Mazdayaçnian religion.

Q.—What do these words signify?

A.—They signify that the proper praise of the Mazdayaçnian religion is contained in the words of the Articles of Faith which we have referred to above and that we must act in conformity to what is taught therein.

Q.—Do you, then, mean to say that to praise the Zoroastrian religion, one must recite the above Confession of Faith?

A.—Not only should we recite the above Confession of Faith, but we should understand it and act up to it.

33.

Summary.

Q.—Will you tell me shortly, what the Confession of Faith teaches, and how a person should act as a *true* Zoroastrian?

A.—Yes. A Zoroastrian should hold three things to be true and should believe in them:—

(1) He should believe in God as the Creator

and the Ruler of the universe, and he should profess that He is the source of all good.

(2) He should believe that there is another life after death.

(3) He should believe that he is answerable to Ahura-Mazda for his deeds on the principle of 'As you sow, so will you reap.'

Q.—After holding these three things as elements of our faith, what three fundamental principles of the Zoroastrian religion should be adopted by us in order that we may be able to lead a righteous life and render a good account of ourselves to the Creator ?

A.—(1) *Humata, i. e.,* good thought.

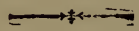
(2) *Hûkhta, i. e.,* good word.

(3) *Hvarshta, i. e.,* good deed.

Q.—What are we to do in order to form a true conception of the above-mentioned three elements of faith and of the above three fundamental principles of the Zoroastrian religion ?

A.—We should continually open our minds for the observation and reflection of God's Nature and for the proper understanding of His

Laws. We should observe the law of *asha* or of Righteous Order which permeates the works of Nature and should direct our thoughts from Nature and its sublime objects,—such as, the sun, the moon, the stars, the fire, water, &c.,—to Nature's God. We should walk on the path traced by the laws of Order and Harmony pervading the universe.



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